



MINUTES
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
Monday, August 26, 2002
Solid Waste Management Center, 1201 Second Street

Solid Waste Management Division

Chairperson Carrie Sprague called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

1. Roll call: Commissioners Present: Rod Becker, Howard Chong, Judith Maguire, Jay Miyazaki, Carrie Sprague (Chair)
Commissioners Absent: Rachel Balsley, Kristine Johnson
Staff: Becky Dowdakin (Secretary)
Members of the Public: Jeff Belchamber, Sara MacKusick, Dave Williamson

2. Comments from the Public: None.

3. Approval of the July 22, 2002 minutes: M/S Becker/Sprague and approved 5/0/0.

4. Old Business

- a. **Biodiesel Resolution**

Dowdakin summarized the proposed biodiesel resolution. Dave Williamson, Ecology Center Operations Manager, added that bio-diesel should not compete with Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as a City fleet choice, but that the City needs to use both fuels. Williamson reported that soy-based biodiesel is driving the market now with a credit for Federal Excise Tax, and is therefore less expensive than recycled oils. He stated that he believed the City's participation would help lower the price.

Becker said that he would oppose the resolution because although the long-term goals were laudable, the City would be bound to a costly policy. He said that more flexibility was required to address budgets and expenses, and that the proposal would not help SWMD. Chong clarified with Williamson that the resolution had been amended by other City commissions to read "as soon as feasible," and that six months should be enough time to implement it.

Chong moved to amend the resolution to say that the City will use 100% biodiesel as soon as practicable and within six months. Becker maintained that this was not fiscally responsible. Miyazaki inquired about the budgetary impact, and Williamson answered that it would be about \$300,000 annually. Miyazaki suggested that \$300,000 was not much out of a \$20 million fund. Dowdakin responded that although this appears to be the case, SWMD is continually denied funding for needs with far smaller costs, including basic facility maintenance items. Chong's motion carried 4/1/0 with Becker voting against.

- b. **Harrison Village Shelter**

Dowdakin reminded the Commission that Becker had drafted a letter regarding Harrison Village Shelter on behalf of the Commission that was included in the packet. Sprague stated that because she is a member of the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB), she would be prohibited from participating in a discussion of the project by ZAB if she had already voted on a motion with the Solid Waste Management Commission regarding the project. In other words, she

would need to recuse herself at ZAB. The Commission discussed this issue at length, noting that the schedule for the project to proceed to ZAB is unknown. Chong made a motion, seconded by Maguire, to table the draft letter until the next meeting. The motion carried 5/0/0.

c. Refuse Fund FY2003 Budget

Dowdakin offered a short description of the Capital Improvement Projects budget provided in the packet, and then distributed a pie chart and table indicating the use of 820 funds by various City departments and divisions. Becker said that he had looked into the Government Standards Accounting Board (GASB) website to find an explanation for “unallocated” expenses. Though he did not find anything related to this issue, he said that he would submit a question through the website and report back at the next meeting. In general, the Commission agreed that “unallocated” expenses needed to be explained, and requested staff to invite Paul Navazio from the City’s Budget Office to the next meeting.

5. New Business

a. Quarterly Reports from Community Conservation Centers and Ecology Centers

Sara MacKusick, Executive Director of Community Conservation Centers (CCC), summarized the April-June 2002 quarterly report provided in the Commission packet. Tonnages increased for donation (8%), commercial (5%), and curbside recycling (4.5%); overall, tonnage is up 5.8%. Revenues from City sorting fees have come in below budget, partly because less sorting is being done on City materials. Employee costs are below budget because the family benefits are not being fully used. Workers Compensation insurance will increase from the current 10% to 18%. CCC is running at a deficit of about \$87,000 as budgeted. Plastic volume continues to grow, with plastic container tonnage from the curbside program increasing by 25%.

CCC and Ecology Center have hired a consultant to study CCC’s capacity and efficiency compared to similar operations, and to create a rate model. MacKusick said she was confident that the study will show CCC is efficient and has room for improvement. For the benefit of the new commissioner, Miyazaki, MacKusick described CCC’s contract and recycling services, and clarified the operating reserve, deficit spending, and the disposal fee.

Williamson summarized the Ecology Center April-June 2002 quarterly report provided in the Commission packet. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday routes tonnages have increased by about 10%, due to a combination of increased gentrification and decreased poaching. He issued a dire warning about Workers Compensation insurance, stating that Ecology Center’s rates may increase to 45% and could threaten their ability to operate. Williamson noted that recycling bin requests have increased significantly, which is a good indicator of expansion. Ecology Center trucks continue to run on 100% biodiesel with no problems. Williamson is working on re-routing and will be testing some new vehicles for use in difficult access areas.

Chong asked how much money Ecology Center spends on public education. Williamson answered \$250,000 over the life of the [five-year] contract, with a current balance of \$190,000. Chong asked if Ecology Center was ready for the 75% waste diversion requirement. Williamson provided a lengthy answer regarding the programs the City needed to consider including expansion of plant debris, food waste, and commercial recycling

programs. He noted that during the Cash-For-Trash Contest in 2001, he had observed that residents were still tossing out a significant amount of recyclable paper with the garbage. Williamson promoted the proposed 2003 Cash-For-Trash Contest, noting that it would build on social marketing and group energy.

b. Quarterly Report from Solid Waste Management Division

Dowdakin reviewed the SWMD April-June 2002 quarterly report that was provided in the Commission packet. She noted that while commercial recycling and residential plant debris collection had remained fairly flat, Transfer Station diversion had increased significantly. Staff is diverting far more metals than in past years, including refrigerators, and diversion of concrete, tires, and CRTs continue to improve. "Self-haul" or "public" plant debris has increased dramatically in the past several months. The table of public plant debris by community origin shows that over 80% of the increase can be attributed to Berkeley itself, though tonnages from neighboring communities increased as well. Dowdakin speculated that increased tipping fees at the West Contra Costa Sanitary Landfill in Richmond might have pushed many customers back to Berkeley.

c. Revised Classification Specification for Weighmaster

Dowdakin reminded the Commission that they had reviewed several classification specifications for SWMD back in January 2002. The Commission did not approve changes to the Weighmaster job description at that time, because staff had more work to do. Dowdakin explained that the actual Weighmaster job has changed significantly over the years. The Transfer Station is extremely busy these days, and the Weighmasters spend all of their time weighing vehicles in and out, collecting fees, checking loads as needed, and providing information to the customers. Formerly, the Weighmaster may have had time to engage in duties on the Transfer Station floor that are typically performed by Refuse Workers. Historically, this position has been filled from the ranks of Refuse Workers and Refuse Drivers, and offered an opportunity for senior employees who had grown weary of refuse collection to continue to work. In rewriting the Weighmaster job description, staff considered that the physical requirements of the job had changed, that care should be taken not to exclude candidates with disabilities that could be accommodated, and to include duties related to the modern computer equipment now in use. After a short discussion, Chong made a motion to approve the revised classification specification for Weighmaster. Miyazaki seconded the motion, which carried 5/0/0.

6. Staff updates: Dowdakin reported that the City Manager had announced the **Consolidation of Refuse Customer Service in the Finance Customer Service Center**. SWMD staff has been working with Finance Department staff to develop a plan on how to accomplish the move and organize the customer service work. Staff will have a memorandum agreement finished by the end of the month and anticipates moving the customer service unit at the end of November. Three customer service representatives will move to Finance, and three will remain with SWMD. Those who remain will handle issues generated from the field, such as problems reported by the drivers, and continue with the administrative support duties they already have.

Dowdakin turned to the **Mid-Term Update on Annual Cleanup** that was provided in the Commission packet. She noted that the report was intended to give the Commission a sense of what was happening with the Annual Cleanup in terms of service, and that staff will return in November with a more detailed report on the entire 2002 program including costs.

Dowdakin pointed out that tonnage had increased overall by about 150 tons through the first five events, but that a significantly greater proportion of the materials was being diverted this year. The Commission discussed the report briefly, and agreed that along with discussion of the final report on the 2002 Annual Cleanup at the November 2002 meeting, they would discuss alternatives for replacing the program with a service that is less costly and less wasteful.

Dowdakin announced that SWMD staff had been working with a non-profit group called Thimmakka on a project called **Greening South Asian Restaurants**, which is aimed at getting South Asian restaurants certified as Green Businesses. Staff has visited about 15 restaurants and made recommendations for food waste and recycling services.

Representatives from other agencies made recommendations on other resource conservation opportunities, such as water and electricity saving devices. Thimmakka will be engaging in some promotional activities surrounding the implementation of their recommendations to the participating restaurants.

Ecology Center has drafted a proposal for the **Cash-For-Trash 2003** contest, supported by an Incentives Fund grant from the Alameda County Waste Management Authority and Source Reduction & Recycling Board. SWMD staff will apply for the funds on behalf of Ecology Center. The Incentives Fund was established specifically to provide cash incentives for recycling to the participants, and the Cash-For-Trash Contest is a natural fit.

Dowdakin mentioned that she had provided an **Updated Commission Roster** in the Commission packet that had at least one error, and is now outdated due to the recent appointment of Miyazaki to the Commission. She will provide a corrected copy with the next packet.

Chair Sprague allowed newly appointed Commissioner Jay Miyazaki to introduce himself and describe why he was appointed to the Solid Waste Management Commission. In addition to providing information about himself and his interests, Miyazaki, who is also on the Budget Commission, announced that the Budget Commission would like to offer a budget workshop to other City boards and commissions.

7. Future agenda items and meeting days: The next meeting will be September 23, 2002. Prospective discussion items for the agenda include draft letter on Harrison Village Shelter, unallocated expenses in the budget, Solid Waste Management Plan, mission statement.
8. Adjourn: M/S Maguire/Becker to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 5/0/0. The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.